

[0051] There are various changes and modifications which may be made to the invention as would be apparent to those skilled in the art. However, these changes or modifications are included in the teaching of the disclosure and it is intended that the invention be limited only by the scope of the claims appended hereto.

Claims

[c1]

An apparatus for enhancing living tissue comprising:

a vessel having an open end and adapted to encompass the tissue to be enhanced;

a source of vacuum connected to said vessel; and

a flexible mass affixed to the open end of said vessel to absorb the pressure exerted by said vacuum, thereby acting as a seal and force diffuser between the vessel and the tissue adjacent the periphery of said vessel.

[c2]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has a shape generally conforming to the shape of the tissue to be enhanced.

[c3]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has a volume greater than the volume of tissue to be enhanced.

[c4]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has a shape which is varied to control the shape of the tissue enhanced.

[c5]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel is dome-shaped having a periphery to surround the tissue to be enhanced.

[c6]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has an opening separate from said open end for connection to said source of vacuum.

[c7]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said flexible mass includes an air pocket.

[c8]

Apparatus for enlarging soft living tissue comprising:

a vessel having a rim defining an open end, the rim being adapted to encompass the tissue;

a source of vacuum connected to the vessel; and

a flexible mass secured to the rim to distribute the forces exerted by said vacuum, thereby acting as a seal and force distributor between the vessel and the tissue adjacent the rim of said vessel.

[c9]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 8 wherein the flexible mass comprises a gasket.

[c10]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 9 wherein the gasket comprises an inflated bladder.

[c11]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 8 wherein the flexible mass comprises a flexible cushion.

[c12]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 8 wherein the rim comprises a circumferential flange.

[c13]

An apparatus for enlarging living tissue comprising:

a vessel having an open end and adapted to encompass the tissue to be enlarged;

a source of vacuum connected to said vessel; and

a mass of elastic material affixed to the perimeter of the open end of said vessel to transform said vacuum applied to create a seal and force diffuser for the forces between the interior of the vessel and the tissue on which said vessel rests.

[c14]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has a shape generally conforming to the shape of the tissue to be enlarged.

[c15]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has an interior volume greater than the volume of the tissue to be enlarged.

[c16]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has a shape which is varied to control the configuration of the resultant enlargement.

[c17]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel is dome-shaped and open at one end to encircle the tissue to be enlarged.

[c18]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has an opening separate from said open end for connection to a source of vacuum.

[c19]

The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said elastic material surrounds an air pocket.

[c20]

An apparatus for enhancing living tissue comprising:

a vessel having an open end and adapted to encompass the tissue to be enlarged;

a source of vacuum connected to said vessel;

a flexible mass attached to the open end of the vessel to act as a seal and force distributor between the vessel and the tissue adjacent the periphery of said vessel.

[c21]

A method of enhancing soft living tissue comprising:

providing an apparatus comprising a vessel having a rim defining an open end and a flexible mass secured to the rim;